grammar and continuity revision
by Jeffrey Eldridge (1)
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jr. comp/grammar test

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It all came down to this: They were in pain. Hunger, weakness and mental anguish ~~; they combined for~~ together as one simple, horrible sensation: pain. Their weakness came from the journey they had been forced into undertaking, ~~the~~ hunger, ~~they suffered~~ stemmed from the conditions of that journey; ~~and their emotional distress came from~~ knowing that once they reached their destination, they were likely to die.

These disconsolate men, women, and children were the people of Judah. Nebuchadnezzar II, the king of the Babylonian Empire, had gone to great lengths to wrest control of the Jewish kingdom from the Egyptians. He had attacked Judah twice, each attack nine years apart. They had so far ~~traveled for~~ over two long days, their captors had informed them that their destination was nearly reached. Once there, those ~~that~~ who had not had the good fortune to die along the way would face a lifetime of slavery and unhappiness. Their only hope was that they would live a short life.

As they came to the top of the last dune they felt they could climb, ~~the saddened~~ Jews were greeted with what would ~~more than likely be~~ the last awe-inspiring sight of their lives: the gate that opened to their hell, and their captor's haven. The Ishtar gate, the most spectacular of the eight gates into Babylon and it's glories, was truly a sight to behold. It was a masterwork of ~~architecture~~ that marveled even those that were brought to Babylon to die. The eyes of

Their emotional distress, 315 disguised as their backs, bent over their feet — under their captors' first. known, simultaneously, and opening up beneath each step. Lilac sand — But, it was sand. That was their path. Their new masters' path:

Synonyms?

true?

move?

Comma use conjunction here?

Jeff you have a tendency to over-use semicolons.

told them only when to stop and when to speed up.

The irony that hung over their captured — drudgery — for those still conscious enough, above their drudgery, was:

Were they wandering?

They had brought themselves to the brink, a generations before, after their escape from Egypt, becoming once again a faceless mass of hopeless survival, in the desert — seeking land

sand!

maybe more about the journey

Synonyms

out of the desert: The Ishtar gate, it's [illegible] menagerie of desert prey ringing the archway/land looking out, looking down solemnly, (in grand red desert sand) blood, and a mosaic

annihilation; lifeless

architectural

obliterating in mosaic every human perspective,

Predators were slaves. Some were some who entered, on all views,

it's = it is

spares enough to be wiped clean by the holy mob they had become.

Third had only spears, then — no steel.

Now they had only steel.

Around their feet, looking them together — a faceless mass, once again,

Their captors' path.

move earlier

the wonder-filled Jews slowly moved up the massive structure, intoxicated by its beauty. The gate was covered mostly with blue-glazed tiles, some of which were embellished with paintings of bulls and dragons, both signs of Babylonian gods. The vault of the Ishtar gate was perfectly arched and was encompassed by a band of color-glazed rosettes carved in brick. Atop the gate there were leveled battlements, behind which stood the Babylonian guards that controlled the opening and closing of the city's main entryway.

"Guards! It is your king! I have returned from our victory at Judah, and I bring with me exiles to serve us. Open the gates so that we may enter!" Nebuchadnezzar, who had directed his army in their attack on the Jews, called to the men above. Nebuchadrezzar was a tall and imposing man, muscular in build and cruel in heart. He was known as a very ruthless man, ~~and was~~ feared in many cities and countries other than his own. This ruthlessness brought with it, however, great military success and impressive conquests. He was powerful. For these reasons, Nebuchadrezzar was the greatest of the Chaldean rulers, and he built Babylon into the greatest city the world had ever seen.

~~After making sure~~ that the man ~~who just spoke~~ was indeed the king, Arioch, the captain of Babylon's guards, gave the order to open the massive ~~Ishtar~~ gate. ~~Arioch was a~~ tall ~~man~~ with broad shoulders, and ~~an~~ extremely agile, ~~and muscular body~~. He had fair skin for a Babylonian, but he

Arioch

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built from the chest out, heartless and conniving.

Receiving word from the ground crew

more than made up for it with his handsomely-sculpted face and impressive body. He ran his sinewy fingers through his dark brown hair and yelled down to Nebuchadnezzar, "~~Right away,~~ Your Majesty. Thank the gods you have returned safely ~~once again~~." He gave a flick of the wrist. 341 "Right away."

As the gates began to open, Nebuchadnezzar turned to Sadem Jezbul, the commander of Babylon's army, "Instruct your men to take these Jews below to the dungeons. If any ~~one~~ of them causes ~~any~~ problems, kill four; they need to realize our authority over them as soon as possible. If there is any business you wish to take up with me, I plan to be in my palace within the city~~"~~, he said. "Do you have any questions?"

or, "if there are any problems; kill them."

True to form, Ariach, kept the order ambiguous. In Babylon, the enslaved were not a rare commodity.

"No, sir, I'll begin on this right away. Have a good night~~"~~, Sadem answered.

"I look forward to seeing you at ~~the~~ Ashpenaz's wedding banquet ~~for Ashpenaz~~ tomorrow ~~evening~~. You will be there?" Nebuchadnezzar asked Jezbul.

"Of course, your majesty, I count the hours~~"~~, Sadem answered sincerely. ~~for Ashpenaz was a good friend, of his also~~ a friend in common with ~~the king (he believed)~~ and Sadem was happy for him.

At that, Nebuchadnezzar turned and walked ~~like the royalty that he was~~ toward the now open gate, and into the ~~wondrous~~ city. The First City. His city. He knew they were first. ~~that he had built~~. He had gone not twenty paces before ~~a very majestic golden~~ the royal chariot had sped out of ~~the city and stopped at his side~~ a corridor (beside the gate), and pulling alongside the king.

driver, in cart,

synonym (from the Iliad)

As indicated by Homer's usage, "Chariot" may refer specifically to horse-and-cart used to transport warrior and waves to/from the battlefield. For the Greeks, anyway

the air to carry you."

"Please, My Lord, allow ~~me to transport you to your destination~~" the chariot driver requested.

"Of course, boy," Nebuchadnezzar replied, as he stepped into the wheeled cart, "~~Proceed to my~~ throne room at the gardens."

As the driver turned the horses around and the chariot sped off down the Processional Street, Sadem shook his head slowly, and, as he turned to address his men and the Jewish captives, he muttered to himself, "How long will it be, great ~~Nebuchadrezzar~~ King, before the power of this once-dead city you have transformed, transforms you?"

only word appropriate to the time, apparently— if the Greeks are to believed

The Hanging Gardens of Babylon, as they were referred to throughout Babylonia and across the world, were indeed a sight to behold. Both in their architectural design and in their very conception, the gardens were perceived as ~~wonders,~~ a singular wonder, and rightly so. The pyramid-shaped terraces were constructed atop a foundation twenty feet across and down, composed of brick, and were seventy-five feet above the ~~E~~arth. Built into them was one of the two royal palaces Nebuchadrezzar had in Babylon. Over the terraces, there were planted lush and exotic greenery, ranging from beautiful, aromatic flowers to large, shady trees. Nebuchadrezzar had built the gardens because one of his wives, Amytis, ~~missed~~ had once longed for ~~horribly~~ the ~~rugged and plant-filled~~ delicately-green landscape of her homeland (~~of Media~~ in Medea) but they soon became a public lattice for ~~a great many people~~ the populace, a refuge from the burning sun and dry air that truly ruled Babylon's climate. Trees and shrubs surrounded

the royal court, ~~so as to offer~~ offering a cool place of solitude for the royal families~~,~~ nowhere near the army of slaves that worked in shifts, day and night, ~~turning~~ who turned the gigantic capstan that controlled the unique watering system that kept the plants alive. To keep their King's Love for the river alive. Their ~~special~~ system used buckets and chains to bring the water up from the river. The Hanging Gardens of Babylon were truly ~~wonders~~ wonderous. And it was from these resplendent gardens that Nebuchadrezzar stood that evening, on the eve of Ashpenaz's wedding banquet, overlooking his kingdom.

Dumb bitch

run on

Euphrates?

who is?

As Nebuchadrezzar watched quietly, chariots slowly patrolled the massive wall around his city and scattered groups of people went about their business below. Babylon was quiet and peaceful that night~~,~~ but, ~~at least~~ for the great king, it was not to last.

for once,

valid name?

Amonen, one of Nebuchadrezzar's personal servants, entered the king's room and addressed him: "Your Majesty, there is a man here to see you. He is waiting outside your throne room."

"Who, ~~would wish to talk to me~~ at this hour?" The king ~~asked authoritatively~~. ~~shot back~~ returned, ~~disdainfully~~.

~~Nervously,~~ Amonen ~~answered~~ shot back ~~his question, though nervously~~. "His name is Haman, and he is from Persia."

but he ~~[illegible]~~ quickly lowered his voice - as though suddenly remembering his message.

lowered

Nebuchadrezzar was furious, "A Persian! Bring him ~~to the throne room~~ immediately; so my guards can remove his head!"

Called out behind Amonen - scurrying ~~away~~ into the corridor, "These Persians must be taught not to speak."

Stepping angrily ~~on~~ to the stairs, ~~to~~ down to the throne room - He shouted the "Do they not know where they are?" He shouted - knowing fully no one was wear - and that all would hear.

Nebuchadrezzar left the balcony ~~he had been observing Babylon from~~ and walked angrily down the stairs that led to his ~~grand~~ throne room. As he approached his throne, ~~adorned with gold and~~ precious jewels, and cut from ~~gold~~ stone, he called two of his personal guards ~~over to him~~. "Amonen is bringing ~~in to~~ us a Persian spy. When he is brought forward, behead him."

gilded with Golden - like the desert sand.

The two guards left their king's throne and walked briskly to the weapon room. Here they kept any special weapons, weapons they didn't usually use, such as battle axes. One guard grabbed the razor sharp battle axe, the other, a piece of sturdy rope to tie the condemned's hands. of the These weapons they added to the already impressive arsenal they held ~~on their person~~ at their posts: ~~A~~ sword in a sheath at their side, three sheathed knives in strategically placed places (the bottom of their back, on the inside of their left leg, and on their left side), and the spears that were strapped to their back.

Just as the guards were reentering the main chamber of the throne room, Amonen entered also, with two royal guards, escorting Haman the Persian. As soon as Haman saw the great Babylonian king, he shouted to him, "Nebuchadrezzar! I have a deal for you! ~~Please here~~ hear me out!" Haman was not a very tall man, nor did he look particularly imposing, but was exceptionally agile and intelligent. He had dark brown hair and while his build was not one that seemed very strong, Haman had enough strength to do a great many admirable things.

~~Jeff Try to reward some sentences - too many commas -~~ dumb bitch

But before Haman could finish, Nebrach. Stood, angrily, to shout him down.

"You persians!

Always expecting to be heard.

It will be [up to] the axe [that teaches to teach] you.

"Please -" Haman tried to interject, but hesitated when one of Nebrachadnez.'s guards stepped ~~forward~~ off his post along the wall.

Nebrachad. Stayed him with a hand.

"The land does not welcome you, Haman - if that is your name.

You are broken - in our wilderness, Haman. There is no church here, in the wilderness - ~~for~~ no church, where you will be heard."

Nebrachad. stepped forward, toward the prisoner.

Nebuchadrezzar ~~only~~ ignored his request, however, saying only, "Haman, ~~as I believe your name is,~~ is it? you~~r~~ are a stranger in a unfriendly land. Many are unwelcome — Many never leave, once they are here. ~~land that does not welcome most strangers~~. You are one of those we do not welcome. Because of this, you will be put to death." And with that, he gave the signal to the two posted soldiers ~~his guards~~ to execute this ~~unfortunate~~ man, where he stood.

The only non-prejudicial revision-suggestion she made.

[no break]

Nebr. stepped away from his throne — motioning towards the area of the palace floor he wanted it to occur.

~~The two throne room guards~~ These walked slowly to Haman. ~~There one~~ tied his hands with rope, ~~tying his hands behind his back and forcing~~ freed him to his knees. The other, with the axe, ~~set down the axe and~~ set his weapon down to ~~laid~~ lay out a thick cloth across the section of floor where they would execute the Persian ~~on~~. The guard standing at Haman's back then forced Haman's head down to rest on the cloth. At that point the executioner, having taken up the ~~picked the~~ axe once more ~~up off the floor,~~ checked it ~~the blade to be sure of it's sharpness,~~ then ~~after which,~~ motioned to the other and ~~he~~ raised the blade ~~it to put the weapon to use~~. ~~Then, just as the blade began moving downward, something happened.~~ Haman whirled his body to the left (taking the guard holding him down by surprise and knocking him over) and kicked upward ~~with all his might~~; his right foot knocking the battle axe away and his left connecting with the executioner's face ~~squarely,~~ at ~~in~~ the jaw. ~~There was~~ a loud "crack," as ~~and~~ the guard's head ~~was~~ turned sharply to the right; his crumpled body fell harshly to the floor. Haman's body hit the floor with a thud just as the other guard got up and was drawing out his sword ~~spear~~. (duh!) Seeing this, Haman ~~reached~~ down for ~~and grabbed~~ the battle ~~axe at~~ its ~~his~~ side, then lunged forward. ~~he jumped to his feet. Using this [momentum] and the strength of his surprisingly powerful~~

Moving the blade over its backward-arc (knowing he would bring it quickly down to end the Persian), the soldier humored himself, silently, in that moment: It was as though he, through his action, had dislodged the room — and all in it (the king!) — from the very strands of Time. As though they, together, even the Persian (whose soul, soon, would be gathered into the fibers of the cloth they had laid out for him) — they stood together, outside of time, inside the throne room, as one, knowing the moment — as sure, and as powerlessly as they knew the room itself.

But, in that moment, not yet in alignment, something did occur (as the soldier leaned into his final position)

briefly unconsious, like the soldier

There would be no hesitation — this, the soldier knew. There would only be the movement of the axe between its positions: backward, forward. Defining the Persian. There would only be the moment.

~~upper body~~, he hurtled the ~~battle~~ axe at the guard ~~(who had just drawn a bead on him and was about to let the spear fly)~~. The doomed guard's last thought was that he ~~could~~ might still throw the ~~spear~~ sword and receive ~~the~~ glory in the afterlife ~~of killing this Persian~~. He didn't.

~~As soon as this guard was dead~~, the two remaining guards drew their weapons: one his sword, the other his spear. ~~The one with the spear threw it.~~ flew towards the unarmored Persian. Haman ducked, but ~~it~~ was not low enough. ~~The guard hadn't put quite enough power into the throw and it faltered. As a result, the spear made~~ but it still Pierced contact with Haman's unprotected shoulder, ~~the blade went~~ passing completely through and mangling the flesh ~~and~~ snapping his left shoulder. ~~With that,~~ the guards ran forward to finish Haman off, ~~but he~~ Haman would not go ~~quite~~ so easily. He wrenched the spear from his shoulder, threw it to the floor and scrambled to the executioner's still body. The two remaining guards were nearly upon him when he drew out the knife from the executioner's left side sheath and hurled it at the guard with his sword drawn. The inexperienced guard who had ~~wounded Haman~~ thrown the spear watched in horror as the knife struck his partner right between the eyes. He watched him fall to the ivory floor of the throne room and the blood pool about his head. ~~When~~ he ~~finally came back to~~ regained his senses, ~~and~~ desperately turned his gaze ~~back~~ to the Persian, ~~it was only~~ but only in time for him to see ~~him~~ bring ~~the executioner's~~ sword down on him, ending his life.

Letting the sword fall slowly out of his right hand, Haman then turned to Nebuchadrezzar and said to him, "I am

no break

The spear had been thrown prematurely with too little force

Haman's

The soldier quickly

a Babylonian

Nebuchad. (?) was furious: "Look away, you fool!"

well aware that you have guards too numerous and strong for me to handle. But please, hear what I say ~~before you have them kill me.~~"

Nebuchadrezzar ~~thought about~~ it for a few seconds, ~~then said to Haman~~, "You ~~are~~ a Persian, therefore you should be put to death; but ~~because~~ you have dispersed four of my ~~better~~ men rather than ~~let them put you to death~~, I will stay the execution, ~~to allow~~ you to speak. However, if, at the end, I do not like what you speak, I will tie your arms and legs to four chariots and they will carry you back to Persia in quarters. Proceed."

Haman began, "~~May the~~ gods bless you, Nebuchadrezzar, ~~now~~ I beg of you ~~to~~ listen with an open mind. Last year, ~~in~~ the thirteenth month, our kingdom was invaded. Not by an army, but by one man. ~~A man from your kingdom~~. ~~Before~~ I continue, ~~I ask you~~, did you commission anyone to intrude upon our kingdom's security, ~~during last year's~~ thirteenth month?" He paused, ~~awaiting the king's reply.~~

"No, I did not." Nebuchadnezzar answered.

~~The Persian continued~~, "We thought not. ~~Now, to~~ continue, this man invaded ~~the kingdom~~ and, in the dead of night, with no provocation, killed sixteen of the royal guards outside the king's throne room. We came upon ~~this man~~ as he was mutilating ~~the~~ body of a ~~still alive man~~. He escaped, but the man whose body he mutilated described the man's physical appearance to us before he died. He described him as a ~~slender, muscular and~~ tall man who walked with a

right eye

only half the pupil —

~~slight~~ limp. He also told us the man's had ~~what looked to be~~ a scar ~~on his right eyeball.~~ He escaped only because it was night.

"~~With this information,~~ we approached our military commanders ~~and other people of importance within our kingdom~~ to see if they had heard of or knew such a man. One of our commanders ~~did. He~~ gave us a name: Ashpenaz, a Babylonian. ~~At that point, the king decided to send me here, to you, with the request~~ that you hand this man over to us; to punish him as we see fit. Of course, I was not sent without bargaining material; ~~but that is secondary~~, ~~I am sure, to you.~~ I have spoken." And Haman apprehensively closed his mouth, waiting for Nebuchadrezzar's response yet again.

Nebrach. Chortled: "This is your expectation? I have no knowledge of this Ashpenaz, or his wherabouts."

Haman Interrupts

After an ~~obviously~~ thoughtful pause, Nebuchadrezzar lifted his eyes ~~to rest on Haman~~ and said, "This Ashpenaz you speak of is a good friend." ~~of mine, he is also a Babylon, which in and of itself makes~~ his life is more valuable than any Persian; but he has truly wronged your king ~~by massacring such a number of his men without provocation or warning.~~ Therefore, ~~I ask you~~ what will you ~~have to~~ bargain with? ~~for~~ that will help me in my decision."

Nebr. retorted: "And

Haman calmly broke in: "Yet we do, Neb — our patience wanes.

Haman replied, "Nebuchadrezzar, ~~what I have to bargain~~ with is something I'm sure you will find ~~hard to~~ refuse. I have names. They are the names of the three men who shared with my king and his army many secrets of this city's defenses. ~~The same secrets that~~ These same men enabled ~~us~~ me to ~~attack Babylon with considerable, but not ultimate, success several years ago~~." ~~Babylon~~ travel here under false pretense."

All knew of your engagement, on Sidon, and that your armies would again strip Judah on their return.

I was sent — and slipped through, as one of your slaves.

"How were you brought before me?"

A Moment passes

"Bring to us this Ashpenaz — and delay you fall until the end of your reign.

"So the rumors of treason were true. This helps your cause, Haman. ~~I would ask you to leave my presence for a little while~~ you must allow me to consult with my advisors. I promise no harm will come to you. Amonen, show Haman to my ~~bed chambers~~ room, near ~~my~~ the garden balcony. I will send for you when I have made my decision, Haman. ~~You are excused.~~" Do not harm him.
Nebuchadrezzar fell silent then, until the two men had left the room.

After Amonen and Haman had left his throne room, Nebuchadnezzar called ~~to~~ into his ~~throne~~ presence the three royal advisors, ~~he~~ favored in all ~~complicated~~ matters of consequence. They had been in their chambers in a corner of the throne room during the ~~whole~~ confrontation ~~and one-on-one meeting~~ between Nebuchadnezzar and Haman. When they were at his side, he explained the situation ~~to him~~, though they already knew the details, and asked them to individually give their opinions. Each had a slightly different interpretation of what problems various courses of action presented, but all three ~~of the men ultimately~~ agreed ~~that~~ Nebuchadrezzar should give Ashpenaz up to the Persians and execute the three traitors ~~very painfully~~.

"For one thing", one advisor brought up, "Persia will very likely attack us if Ashpenaz is not handed over, and we really have no way of knowing if the traitors have given up more crucial military information recently. We need to reevaluate our defenses before we can resist any kind of attack from a powerful country."

Still unarmed, Nab. stepped cautiously past Haman - to the bell cord beside his throne. A door was heard slid open. Footsteps immediately echoed down the hallway

"Besides the fact", pointed out another, "~~that~~ Ashpenaz is not very important to you, your majesty, or to Babylonia. He is expendable."

"And wouldn't you love to get your hands on those sordid pigs that would betray their country's defenses to a rival kingdom?" ~~Another~~ piped ~~in.~~ back the first

They seemed to have convinced the powerful king. He was obviously struggling with himself, however. Finally, he spoke:

"Ashpenaz ~~and I have been the closest of friends since before I can recall. He is my most~~ trusted advisor and is ~~like a brother~~ to me. But now, the city that I, and my father before me, revived and rebuilt from ~~it's own ruins~~ is in danger of being taken ~~away from me because of~~ the unexplainable actions of this same dear friend. I am forced to choose ~~one~~. ~~Either~~ the friend whom I love, ~~or the city that I also love~~. I hold in my hands ~~the~~ life ~~of both~~. ~~Which~~ do I choose?" ~~Here, Nebuchadrezzar stopped.~~ He rose from his throne and ~~began pacing around his~~ grand ~~throne~~ room; over the corpses of his dead guards and the dried pools of their blood. ~~Finally~~, he stopped, "Amonen!" ~~He~~ yelled.

"~~He~~ returned home early, so ~~he~~ would not be late for dinner.

Amonen rushed into the throne room, "Yes Your Majesty"

"Bring the Persian down. I have made my decision." He then turned to his advisors and said, "You are no longer needed, you are excused"

As Amonen left and the advisors returned to their quarters, Nebuchadrezzar returned to his throne. When Haman

He said to his advisors. Then, to the guard: "And that is where you will find him — in bed, I'm sure, the old man, at this hour.

Take a foot detail with you — bring Haman to his guest.

Escort them well outside the walls, but do not remain beyond 1 shusi — His army has tracked here, no doubt.

You say he is your friend — but why did you send him to insult Elam?"

Cambyses has not turned west against Nineveh. And, the other third.

"You know we did not all three agree."

my son through the ranks.

Last of my father's generals — yet a brother to me.

Only the royal guard was to be thinned, so we could take the palace this year. He fled early though — we know nothing we didn't already know.

From the city, I gain more.

Staring out, over the vast palms of blackness he strained to discern what the faint pools of light seemed to reveal.

was brought into the king's presence again, Nebuchadrezzar asked him, "Have these traitors given your king information of our defenses recently?"

Haman didn't even flinch, "Yes, Nebuchadrezzar, they have kept us very current ~~on your army~~."

At that Nebuchadrezzar flew into a rage. "Give me the names of these asses! They will pay dearly for their deceit!" Then, the troubled king calmed himself and said softly, "I have thought about this long and hard. It all comes down to which I love more: my city...or my friend." Here Nebuchadrezzar paused once more, thinking scrupulously about what he was about to say. Then, he continued, "Take Ashpenaz. You are not to kill him until you are back in your country. Now, give me the names."

I have no answer.

Haman was pleased with this, but he wanted to make sure he had Nebuchadrezzar's word on this. "Thank-you Nebuchadrezzar, ~~may~~ the gods will favor you ~~for~~ the rest of your days; ~~now~~ I do require, however, ~~that~~ you promise me that I ~~will get back to Persia alive~~, and I also need to know where Ashpenaz can be found. ~~These things I need to relay to the small battalion I have waiting for my word outside your walls.~~" Haman's smirk softened, briefly: "Indeed, this is true."

Neb.'s statement on Previous Page

Nebuchadrezzar thought for another moment, then answered, "You have my word as the great ruler that I am that you and your forces will make the trip back to ~~Persia~~ Persis with no interference from my military or any other ~~that~~ I ~~have~~ control ~~over~~. ~~As to where Ashpenaz can be found, I have~~

If Ashpenaz is not where I tell you now he must be,

~~no way of knowing that.~~ I can tell you ~~however~~ that tomorrow ~~evening,~~ he is celebrating ~~his~~ a wedding, at the Afifu House, outside the market stalls, with a banquet for his family and friends. It will be held at in the area around the Etemenanki monument. If I were you, that is when I would seize him. Now, ~~I have told you all you need to know~~, give ~~the~~ me the names ~~of the traitors.~~"

But again I tell you: He is an old man who returned early.

This, at the end, is all I know."

Haman pulled from his blood-soaked cloak a scroll, once a light brown, now a unique shade of crimson. "The names written on this are those you seek. I thank you humbly for your cooperation." More than three,

"I have given you what you want, I never want to see your face in ~~Babylon after this affair~~ my city again. Leave."

~~Amonen began to walk~~ Haman was led ~~out.~~ "~~The Persian can find his own way out. I need you to do a few~~ things for me."

So,

Neb. looked around. The room once more had a full set of guards — almost as though they had risen from the gardens outside and come in through the windows.

~~Nebuchadrezzar informed him~~, and after Haman had left, Nebuchadrezzar gave Amonen his instructions, "Take this", he said, handing him the scroll with the doomed men's names on it, "~~and~~ give ~~it~~ the copy to Arioch. Tell him to find these men and bring them to me personally and to bring with him three executioners, ~~exceptional torturers~~ from the courthouse, its dungeon, and from an estate by ~~him~~ his family that I will be unable to attend his wedding banquet because of a personal matter I must attend to. Do you understand this?"

first to the scribe — have him copy it,

Return the original by morning.

Do not tell them anything beyond this.

~~Amonen~~ His soldier acknowledged ~~Nebuchadrezzar's request~~ the direction and set out ~~to~~ into the black night. As ~~Amonen~~ he left the throne room, Nebuchadnezzar stood slowly and ~~said to~~ called after him, ~~"Amonen, I wash my hands of this affair.~~ The safety and security of my city

He motioned for them clear away the bodies.

One of them was called forward.

The soldier stopped and turned.

was in danger." A king is expected to make sacrifices for his kingdom. This is what I did. I did the right thing. Did I not?"

I wash my hands,

~~Amonen turned to face his king~~, he looked him in the eyes from across the room ~~and said simply~~, "Your Majesty, it is not my place to say."

~~And with that, Nebuchadnezzar's servant, Amonen,~~ left the throne room to do his duty to his people... and his king.

~~After~~ a moment, as if by cue, Neb.'s soldier replied;

The king sat down again, dismissed the soldier with a gesture;

"Out into my city, then — and be sure all duties are paid."

Soon, only the torchlight remained.

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